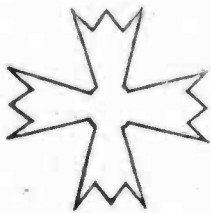


MASONS' MARKS.

THOUSANDS of our readers, and if all who ought to read our work read it, at least sixty thousand—for there are upwards of sixty thousand masons in Great Britain—will readily recognise the meaning of the words at the head of this article, while masons' marks as a phrase, and in themselves, will be to many a mystery and hieroglyphic; but this is the title we choose to give to a brief notice of a subject which we must at a more leisure period more largely enter upon. We have been reading two published letters of Mr. George Godwin's on "Certain Marks discoverable on the Stones of various Buildings erected in the Middle Ages," which letters are the subject of a communication by that gentleman to the Society of Antiquaries, through Sir Henry Ellis—all honoured names, and not least so that of the author of these letters. Mr. Godwin is yet but a young man, but he has, by the indefatigable and earnest exercise of a fitting talent, managed to associate his name with some of the most interesting researches and doings in art that have engaged our attention for the last seven years; and we sincerely hope that his future career may be the appropriate continuance of so much promise at setting out. In these letters he brings to view some 160 specimens of masons' marks, from various edifices of the middle ages, from Gloucester, Bristol, and Cologne Cathedrals, from various abbeys and churches in England and on the Continent, and from Punic inscriptions found upon the site of Carthage. We could say a great deal, and there is much to be said on this interesting subject, but for the present must confine ourselves to an extract from Mr. Godwin's second letter, headed by the dedication cross taken from his work as from Furness Abbey.



LETTER II.

DEAR SIR,—In the month of December, 1841, I had the pleasure of laying before the Society some observations on the fact, that the stones both inside and outside numerous ancient buildings in England and France, bear, in many cases, peculiar marks or symbols, apparently the work of the original builders. Since then I have had an opportunity of examining the Cathedral of Cologne, and some other sacred edifices in that city, where I found many similar marks. Copies of some of these, half real size, I beg leave to forward with this letter, in order that they may be compared with the diagrams previously sent.

In length they vary from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 inches. They are not so deeply cut in as those already spoken of, nor are they formed by so wide a line, but nevertheless they are all remarkably clear and distinct. More order is perceptible in the position of the marks in the interior of this cathedral than I have elsewhere observed; for example, they appear with considerable regularity up the centre of the four chief members of each of the great clusters of columns dividing the nave and aisles; and they commence at a certain height from the ground, nearly uniformly.

Monsieur Didron, of Paris, it seems, has communicated a series of observations on these marks to the *Comité Historique des Arts et Monuments*. He has found them at Strasburgh, Spire, Worms, Rheims, Basle, and elsewhere, and believes he can discover in them reference to distinct schools, or lodges of masons. The marks collected by M. Didron divide themselves, according to his opinion, into two classes, those of the overseers, and those of the men who worked the stones. The marks of the first class consist generally of monogrammatic characters, and are placed separately on the stones: those of the second class partake more of the nature of symbols, such as shoes, trowels, mallets, &c. It is stated that at Rheims, in one of the portals, the lowest of the stones forming one of the arcades, is marked with a kind of monogrammatic character, and the outline of the sole of a shoe. The stone above it has the same character, and two soles of shoes; the third the same character and three soles and so all round the arcade. The shoe mark he found also at Strasburgh, and no where else, and accounts for this by the fact, that parts of the

cathedral of Rheims were executed by masons fetched from Strasburgh.

The Committee either have published, or are about to publish, a set of instructions to their correspondents on this point, with plates of the marks already collected, in order that they may obtain additional information, and means of comparison.

Strengthened by this proceeding on their part in my belief before expressed, that the observation and collation of these marks may ultimately aid in elucidating the history of the Free-Masons, I feel encouraged to bring the subject again before the Society, which otherwise I should not have done.

The lamented Mr. Rokewode, in a paper on the dedication and consecration of churches, printed in the 25th volume of the *Archæologia*, observes that "the ancient altar-stone, known by the crosses graven in the centre and at the angles, is now frequently to be found in our churches, generally applied to sepulchral purposes. The crosses upon it were intended to mark the spots anointed with chrism,—and if I do not mistake, this was the object of the crosses once inlaid with metal, cut in the external walls of some churches, as in the cathedral of Salisbury, and the churches of Edinon in Wilt, Cannington in Somersetshire, and Brent Pelham in Herts. It may also be observed, that on one of the Norman pillars in New Shoreham church, are two Jerusalem crosses, probably graven on the occasion of the dedication."

Mr. Sydney Smirke, in a paper which follows the last quoted, and illustrates it from the church of St. John at Syracuse, refers to a pontifical printed at Rome in 1595, and now in the British Museum, where the Bishop is enjoined to mark with his thumb dipped in the chrism, twelve crosses on the walls of the church and others on the door, and altar. It further provides that these crosses are to be at the height of 7 feet 5 inches above the floor.

I do not quote these observations with the view of shewing an immediate connection between any religious ceremonies and the marks in question. They may, however, be deemed to bear, although slightly, upon the subject; and therefore they are introduced; the more so too, perhaps because in searching for marks at Furness abbey (where they abound), a large cross, 14 inches high, and 14 inches wide, was found, cut on the external face of a stone, at the east end of the church, as represented at the head of this extract.

The marks of which we are especially speaking, it can perhaps hardly be doubted, were made chiefly to distinguish the work of different individuals. At the present time the man who works a stone (being different from the man who sets it), makes his mark on the bed or other internal face of it, so that it may be identified. The fact, however, that in the ancient buildings it is only a certain number of the stones which bear symbols,—that the marks found in different countries (although the variety is great), are in many cases identical, and in all have a singular accordance in character,—seems to shew that the men who employed them did so by system, and that the system, if not the same in England, Germany, and France, was closely analogous in one country to that of the others.

Moreover, many of the signs are evidently religious and symbolical, and agree fully with our notions of the body of men known as the Free Masons.

With reference to the religious character of associated masons in very early times (times much earlier than any of the works already mentioned belong to), I am induced to allude to a curious MS. account of the proceedings of four sculptors who worked "in the name of the Lord." It is in No. 91 of the *Arundel MSS.* at the British Museum, described as "*Sanctorum illa miracula, et martyria*," and is to be found at folio 218, headed, "*Claudii Socium. ejus*." It commences thus: "At the time Diocletian was Emperor, various metallic substances were cut by the Pannonians from the mountains in his presence. It came to pass that when he had collected all the workers in metal, he found amongst those endowed with great skill in art certain men named Claudius, Castor, Simphorianus, and Nicostatus, who were wonderful in the art of masonry. These men were secretly Christians, observing the commandments of the Lord, and, whatsoever work in the art of sculpture they performed, they did it in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Further on, it proceeds: "At the command of Diocletian, a porphyritic shell with pomegranates and foliage, was perfected by the hands of Claudius, Simphorianus, Castor, and Nicostatus, and they were brought under the notice of the Emperor. And he was pleased with all things, and made them many presents. Then said Diocletian, I desire that some columns with foliated capitals should be carved out of the porphyritic mountain under the direction of Claudius, Simphorianus, and Castor. When the philosophers heard this they were vehemently indignant because the command of Diocletian provoked them. Coming, however, to the

mountain, they marked out the portion of stone which should be cut away. Then the artificers in masonry prayed, and made the sign of the cross of Christ, and giving directions and setting to work, they began to cut the stone for the neck of the columns, and they worked at it daily for three months. When, however, one wonderful column had been produced with perfect art, the philosophers said to Claudius and the others. Ye who are enriched with gifts, give your skill to the shaping of another column. Wherefore, replied they, do ye wish to learn the art from us? Still, in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we trust, we will shape this other column like the first. And giving their labour with the utmost diligence, within twenty-six days they had cut the other column. Then the philosophers indignantly exclaimed. These mysterious words can only pertain to art-magical."

ASSESSED TAXES CASES.

Determined by the Judges on Appeal.

(No. 1481).—Windows—Due Assessment in 1834-5—What is—Armorial bearings—What are.

A party was assessed for the year ending 5th of April, 1835, for nine windows; he had opened eleven since; charge increased in 1840 for twenty-two windows, that appearing to be the then number: Held legal; as appellant did not account for the two windows, or shew that they did not exist in 1834-5.

The impression of a thistle on a common pencil-case, with the motto "*dinna forget*," are chargeable as armorial bearings when used.

At a meeting of the commissioners acting for the borough of Wigan, in the county of Lancaster, in execution of the acts granting the duties of assessed taxes, held the 15th September, 1840, for hearing appeals against the first assessment of the said duties, for the year 1840, ending the 5th of April, 1841 (48 Geo. 3, c. 35, sch. A.):—

Mr. Edwards, of Wigan, aforesaid, draper, appealed against an assessment in respect of the windows of his house, the number charged being twenty-two; and also against the charge of 2l. 8s. for armorial bearings sch. (K.)

The appellant stated that he resided, and was tenant of the house in question in 1834. That he then carried on business under the firm or style of Edwards and Co., and was rated to the relief of the poor under that title; that he was then assessed for nine windows, and has continued to be so assessed.

That by error or mistake, the name Marsden and Co. was inserted in the assessment of 1834, instead of Edwards and Co. That the assessor for that year made out a bill in the name of Marsden and Co., and delivered it to the appellant, who, without observing the mistake in the name, paid the tax accordingly.

That in pursuance of the privilege granted by the Act of 4 and 5 Will. 4, c. 54, s. 7, he has since opened eleven windows, for which he claims exemption.

The surveyor conceived, that as the appellant's name did not appear in the assessment for 1834, he was not entitled to the benefit of the before-mentioned Act; and further, that the house in question was not duly assessed in 1834; the number of windows therein in the present year, 1840, being twenty-two, and the appellant having, as before stated, opened eleven windows, would leave eleven windows in 1834, whereas the assessment in that year was for nine windows only.

The appellant also claimed to be exempt from the charge of 2l. 8s. made upon him for armorial bearings, as the seal upon which the surveyor grounded the charge was not the arms of the appellant or of any other persons. That he does not make a practice of using any device, crest, or arms whatever, but has occasionally sealed letters with a common pencil-case, upon which was the impression of a thistle, and the motto "*dinna forget*." An impression from the seal accompanies the case. We, the majority of the commissioners present, having some doubts as to the appellant's liability, directed the assessment to be reduced from twenty-two to nine windows, and also relieved him from the charge for armorial bearings; but the surveyor expressed his dissatisfaction with our decision, and requested a case, both as to windows and armorial bearings, to be stated for the opinion of the judges.

Witness our hands the 4th day of February, 1841.

WILLIAM LAMB.
BENJAMIN POWELL.

18th May, 1841.—We are of opinion that the determinations of the Commissioners is wrong.

J. PATTERSON. T. COLTMAN. W. WIGHTMAN.
—Justice of the Peace.

PRINTING.—The foundation-stone of the free church in this parish was laid on Tuesday week, when the devotional services were conducted by the Rev. Dr. Macdonald, the venerated pastor.